



Engaging the public in biodiversity issues

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Abstract:

To engage people in biodiversity and other environmental issues, one must provide the opportunity for enhanced understanding that empowers individuals to make choices and take action based on sound science and reliable recommendations. To this end, we must acknowledge some real challenges. Recent surveys show that, despite growing public concern, environmental issues still rank below many other problems, such as terrorism, health care, the economy, and (in the U.S.) family values. Moreover, much of the recent upswing in interest in the environment is due to the marked shift in attention to global warming away from other environmental problems such as destruction of ecosystems, water pollution, overpopulation, and biodiversity loss. Such a change in public focus often comes with a tendency to decouple various environmental problems and ignore their synergistic effects. Exacerbating this problem are arguments from the media and other sources that discourage public interest in environmental topics by characterizing the science behind them as overly complex, immersed in debate and controversy, and detached from human interests. Educational programming, media, exhibitions, and other means of public outreach should build on the welcome increase in public interest in global warming by demonstrating the interplay of various environmental disruptions. In the case of biodiversity, the importance of species in providing ecosystem services, natural beauty and pleasure, and sustaining human lives is a message that requires constant attention and recrafting to impact diverse audiences.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2556408>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Ecosystem Changes

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation): ☒

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified